

LIBERIA: A COUNTRY REVIEW

Friday Aworawo Ph.D.
Department of History and Strategic Studies
University of Lagos

Abstract

In many respect, Liberia is fundamentally important in the history of West Africa. It is the only country in the sub-region that was never colonised. This experience served as stimulus to African nationalists in their struggle to emancipate the continent from colonial rule. As a Negro state, it also demonstrated the Africans ability to manage their internal affairs. But in spite of these promising beginning and huge expectations associated with Liberia, the country was later bedevilled with civil wars and other issues that dragged her to such political instability, that compelled West African regional intervention. In the light of the aforementioned, this paper interrogates issues that fan the ember conflict in Liberia as well as the patterns of intervention that restored her democratic rule. The paper finds that Liberia has ...potentials....., and then maintains that for enduring peace, stability and social economic development to thrive, the elected leaders of Liberia must rule in the interest of all and ensure the provision of the needed conducive environment and infrastructures that would enable the country to realise its potentials (mention these potentials).

Key words: Liberia, economy, struggle for power, conflict

Introduction

Lying on the Atlantic in the Southern part of West Africa, Liberia is bordered by Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. With a population of about four million, six hundred and fourteen (4,000,614) people as at the last population census conducted in 2017 (source), Liberia is Africa's oldest independent Republic. It was founded in 1820 as a result of the efforts of the American Colonization Society (ACS) to settle freed American slaves from the United States and the Caribbean in West Africa (Agbu, 2006: 21-22).

Shortly after, the ACS purchased additional area at Cape Mesurado. Rev. Robert Gurly, thereafter named the colony "Liberia", meaning the "Land of the Free". Though, the first site occupied by the settlers was named "Monrovia", after President James Monroe, the then president of the United States of America. The society contended that the emigration of blacks to Africa was an answer to the problem of slavery and the incompatibility of the races. Hitherto 1820, the area generally called Liberia was peopled by indigenous groups such as the Kondo, Mandingos, Kru, Gio, Sabsu just to mention a few. Moreover, King Sabsu exercise suzerainty over the area until the American Colonisation Society purchased and settled the first batch of 88 emigrants from the United States.

The country's land area, which is 37,189sq miles, is one of the smallest in the West Africa sub-region. Liberia is multi-ethnic. There are sixteen major ethnic and linguistic groupings in the country, viz Bassa, Kru, Gio, Mano, Vai, Kissi, Lorma, Krahn, Grebbo, Belleh, Dehn, Mendigo, Gola, Sarpo, Kpelli and Dey (Onuoha, 2004: 23-27). Also inclusive, though not ethnically affiliated, is the Americo-Liberian grouping. Thus, Liberia is a heterogeneous society. It is also a blend of many religions affiliations such as Christianity, Islam and Traditional religions.

Dimensions of Liberian Economy

Liberia, form a significant portion of the West Africa tropical rain forest. The country has two major lakes. These are Lake Piso in Grand Capemount County and Lake Shepherd in Maryland county. This is in addition to a combination of rivers such as Greenville, lower-Buchanan river, Sinoe River just to mention but a few. The gateways and waterways provide access to the outside world and tourism. The country is noted all over the world as one of the largest producer of iron ore, diamond, timber, rubber, cocoa, palm kernel-oil and coffee. It has been estimated that Liberia accounted for over 75% of iron ore and rubber exports from Africa to Europe and the United States of America. Liberia's economy is therefore based on the combination of these resources. Importations of machines, transport equipment, cement, chemical, crude oil are equally done to mitigate for what was not produced locally for the smooth running of the economy. Some of the country's trading patterns include China, USA, European Union (EU) Spain, Thailand and Nigeria as well as foreign aid and goodwill from Africa and the West. It has been estimated that prior to the Liberia civil war, United States also had invested over 8.7

billion dollars on the Liberia mining sector between 1981-1988 (Akpan, 2005:16-20). The various strategic water ways which linked Liberia to the outside world as already noted above have equally made the country accessible with other countries for the purpose of global trade.

However, regardless of the seemingly interesting description of the Liberia economy especially owing to the availability of resources and goodwill, majority of the population of the African oldest republic still depend largely on subsistence farming for their livelihood. The country also witnessed some difficulties from the outset. The ACS from the commencement ran the country with financial assistance and humanitarian organisations. Though, the aid was inadequate, they were subsequently reduced and cut off as the support for the colony lessened among the white and Negro Americans. And yet another challenge was attack by the indigenous population as well as unending power struggle between the Negroes and the Mulattoes. This state of concerns led to the introduction of a constitution in 1825 under which the ACS appointed governors to carry out its orders. But this did not improve matters for the Society as white officials were domineering and biased against the Negroes especially in the distribution of the colony land. Furthermore, problem also came from the activities of the British and the French merchants who resisted Liberia's imposition customs duties on ships trading in her ports.

Both mention the countries argued that Liberia not being an American colony or an independent country had no status in international law, and therefore could not impose customs duties. It was to overcome this difficulty that necessitated normalising her anomalous status that Liberia sought for and won independence in 1847. From this period onward, more Negroes and mulattoes joined the settlers to increase the population of the country. Gradually but steadily, expansion into the interior was also encouraged with the passage of time. For instance, in 1836, the various settlements along the coast with the exception of Maryland County merged to form the Commonwealth Liberia.

Shortly after independence, the first Negro governor, Joseph Roberts, was declared the first president of Liberia. As an administrator, he set earning for more government revenue by imposing customs duties on ships trading in Liberia's port since the issue of the status of the country had been resolved in 1847. At independence, the country's constitution was modelled after that of the United States, which provided for the president, the senate, the House of Representatives and a Supreme Court. The country equally had two political parties; the Republican Party mostly dominated by the Mulattoes and the True Whig championed by the full-blooded Negroes. The two parties dominated the political landscape of Liberia until 1883 when one party system was introduced. By the end of the century, however, the colour prejudiced inherited problems between and among the settlers and the indigenous groups, have been managed and decreased greatly. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, another strong group of Americo-Liberian emerged to chart a new course for the country. The effect was a development that ushered Liberia into a new trajectory in the history of the country. The Americo-Liberia governed the country for a period of a century and three decades and created the conditions that culminated in the outbreak of the civil war. A dispassionate appraisal of Liberia since the foundation of the country and the period shortly after independence demonstrates that the oldest West African sovereign political entity was confronted with many social economic and political difficulties. The survival and economic transformation would require good governance by her leaders.

Origin of Liberian Conflict

The immediate cause of the Liberian Civil War (be consistent with either civil war or conflict) can be traced back to 12th April, 1980 with the assassination of President William Tolbert and other key government officials by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe who had accused them of corruption, neglect of the military and mismanagement of public funds. Although the killing was unconstitutional, it nevertheless received the endorsement and acceptability of the majority Liberians due to what was perceived as the domination and injustice of the minority by the dominant Americo-Liberians in the socio-political and economic landscape of Liberia.

The Americo-Liberians - descendants of former American slaves- make up only five per-cent of the population, but had dominated governance of the country. The Americo-Liberia elites, who constitute 5% of the total population, had ruled Liberia for about 133 years until 1980 when Doe led a military coup d'état, which

overthrew the government of William R. Tolbert, and dismantled the Americo-Liberia oligarchy (Vogt, 1992: 37-38).

As earlier mentioned, politically, Liberia's form of government was modelled after the United States of America's democracy, but it was never actually practised. The electoral process had often been manipulated to the extent that only the Americo-Liberians had been in (remove cliché) power until the 1980 coup d'état. Thus, the 1980 coup d'état led by Doe brought to an end the 133 years oligarchy of the Americo-Liberians (ECOWAS, 1992:30). Thus, it can be argued that the desire for a better government by the majority groups in Liberia against the backgrounds of socio-economic and political contradictions in Liberia occasioned the coup d'état of 1980. Hence, many Liberians legitimised the regime even though it was unconstitutional.

This support however became ephemeral as Samuel Doe was accused of appointing into key positions within the military and civilian administration, members of his Krahn ethnic group (source). Doe and his advisers were unable to see the needed changes in the Liberia society following the dismantling of the Americo-Liberia oligarchy. Under Doe, foreign travels, issuance of decrees and crackdown became the government's preoccupation. Between 1980 and 1990, corruption in Liberia was at its highest level. Ministers became millionaires overnight. Lebanese and Indian businessmen manipulated the economic system to the disadvantage of Liberians, as they entered all facets of businesses in the Liberian economy. Often times, the Lebanese and the Indian businessmen would bring into Liberia, members of their family's to perform middle managerial jobs, which could have been performed by Liberians (provide sources).

Liberians, by and large, did the menial jobs and were paid miserable wages that were not in consonance with the standard wages. The high rate of unemployment kept workers quiet, as resorting to strike action would only cause immediate dismissals. Government's protection could not be guaranteed, as officials were often in the pockets of foreign businessmen. Corruption was everywhere. In 1985, for example, the United States contributed over 500 million dollars toward Liberia's development programme. Regrettably, a considerable amount of this money went into private pocket even though part of the money was used for the construction of new barracks.

Regardless of these wide-ranging corruptions, which contributed negatively to the lives of ordinary Liberians, the people were relieved when Doe promised to return the country to democratic rule through elections that would be free and fair in which himself was not to participate. Shortly thereafter, Doe again announced his participation in the election after his attempt to forestall the election became impossible. An attempted failed coup by Doe's former commanding General, Tomas Qwuiwonkpa, and members of Qwuiwonkpa ethnic group Gio/mano paid severely for the sins of their kinsman (Adeleke, 2007: 433-434). Thus there was a general oppression and extra-judicial killings in the country.

This exacerbated the growing dissatisfaction with Doe's administration, coupled with his alleged interference with the electoral process and the re-composition of the electoral commission, which eventually declared him winner of the election in 15th October 1985. This worsened the tension in Liberia. It was therefore not surprising when the crisis degenerated into a civil war.

Charles Taylor precipitated the Liberian Civil War, which started in 1989, after several peaceful means of changing the Doe's government had failed. A guerrilla movement known as the National patriotic front of Liberia (NPFL) emerged under the leadership of Taylor (Suiton, 1997, 80-82) As an erstwhile minister under Doe, Taylor fled Liberia following accusations of embezzlement. After a period of exile and imprisonment in the United States, Taylor returned to Burkina Faso, where he finalized plans to launch a guerrilla attack on Doe's government. With adequate military training and support from Libya and North Korea, he established a base for his militias in Cote d'Ivoire (Adekeye, 2008: 177-179).

This was the beginning of Taylor's incursion into Liberia to unseat Doe's government. Taylor capitalized on the popular discontent against the Doe's government and the huge assistance provided by his estranged friend, Prince Yommie Johnson, who mobilized mostly Gio and Mano ethnic groups into the NPFL. Johnson later formed a guerrilla group known as the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) that further ensured that Doe's government was totally removed from Liberia. This was in addition to yet another feuding faction known as the United Liberia Movement for Democracy (ULIMD). This group was also determined that the Doe's

misrule did not continue in Liberia. As such, there were three well known factions in the conflict, which the Armed forces of Liberia (AFL) under the control of Doe, had to deal with by May 1989.

It must however be stressed that the euphoria with which the insurrection was greeted was informed not by the people's liking for Taylor, but by the popular sentiment against Doe. The implication of this was that Liberians were more inclined towards selecting an Americo-Liberian, notwithstanding their experiences with the Americo-Liberia oligarchy, who ruled the country for 133 years without anything-concrete things to show for it. Hence, the people did not see Taylor as one who was "championing his own cause" and those of the few Americo-Liberian elites. Thus, the need for a change in the political landscape of Liberia was the primary reason why various groups in the country wanted Doe out of power. And before long, the war had started.

An incursion into Liberia on December 24, 1989 by an armed group known as the NPFL under the leadership of Taylor, marked the effective beginning of the Liberian crisis. The AFL under the control of Doe initially repulsed the attack. Shortly thereafter, army began indiscriminate harassment of the people of Nimba County for allegedly aiding the rebels. The consequence of this was that, the NPFL, which was originally no more than a small band of guerrilla warriors gained popularity in Nimba county, where it recruited its combatants and successfully launched the campaign to bring down the oppressive regime of Doe.

The propaganda easily gained ground because majority of the AFL were recruited from an ethnic group outside Nimba county (The Guardian, 1990:45). Before long, the conflict had assumed a serious ethnic dimension as attack and counter-attacks and repression escalated in a vicious circle. By May 1990, hostilities between the AFL and the warring factions had started to record major casualties. By the time the NPFL eventually arrived in Monrovia in early July 1990, the conflict had recorded over 200,000 casualties.

There were countless reports of Human Rights violations, including instances where individuals were lined-up and after being identified were beheaded. Many men and women had their throats sliced and pregnant women were disembowelled as a result of the putsch among the different groups. Government facilities were destroyed, while humanitarian assistance was not allowed. Foreigners were also trapped.

Meanwhile the number of Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries had swelled into hundreds of thousands. The Liberia crisis soon proved to be a West Africa regional problem, as evident in the trans-border dynamics of the conflict, spilling into Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea (West Africa, 1991:23). This became a serious challenge for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The Lagos Treaty established ECOWAS in 1975, for the purpose of economic development and integration of the sub region. Intervention in the Liberian crisis was therefore seen as a pioneering move by the organisation to arrest armed conflict, which could serve as impediment to the realization of body's mandate (Bassey and Nyonge, 2012: 271). Accordingly, the sub-regional organisation initiated peacekeeping and peace-enforcement as a security strategy to stop the carnage and armed hostility within Liberia.

Reasons Adduced for the Intervention

Considering the unprecedented devastating impact as a result of the tumultuous situation created by the clashes between the rebels and the AFL, as horrors of wanton killing and carnage were being perpetrated against Liberians and foreigners alike as well as, the grave danger the region was exposed to, the leaders of ECOWAS therefore formed a committee to see what could be done.

The magnitude of human suffering and obvious spill over effects of the Liberia conflict into the immediate neighbouring countries and the entire West Africa sub-region prompted ECOWAS Heads of States at their Banjul-summit meeting on 30th May, 1990 to call on the warring parties, Taylor of (NPFL) and Doe of (AFL) to observe an immediate cessation of hostilities to end the wanton killing and destruction of life and properties .

The essence of ECOWAS intervention in the Liberian crisis was captured by President Babangida of Nigeria during this period. According to him:

Nigeria has no territorial ambition in Liberia or anywhere else. We are in Liberia, because events in the country have led to the massive destruction of properties. The massacre by all the warring

parties of thousands innocent civilians, including those of foreign nations, women and children some of whom had sought sanctuary in the churches, mosques, diplomatic missions, hospitals and under Red Cross protection, contrary to all recognized standard of civilized behaviour and international ethics and decorum. To those involved in false historical comparisons, intellectual intoxication and phantom analysis, I ask, should Nigeria and other responsible countries in this sub-region stand and watch the whole Liberia turned into one mass graveyard (Federal Ministry of Information, 1991).

All these aforementioned reasons made it impossible for ECOWAS to adopt a strictly legalistic approach and sit on the fence, and conclude that it was Liberian's internal affairs and therefore beyond the scope of the ECOWAS protocol of non-aggression and mutual assistance in defence matter. But as events turned out, ECOWAS opted to intervene primarily on humanitarian ground, coupled with the fact that sub-regional economic integration would only be possible if West is crisis free.

By February, 1990, barely three months into the armed conflict, official figures from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) confirmed that about 300,000 Liberian refugees were in Gambia, 120,000 in Cote d'Ivoire, 80,000 in Sierra Leone and 141,000 in Nigeria. Hence, the breakdown of law and order, the increasing level of social and economic hardships and the escalating insecurity of life and property, necessitated the need for the situation to be arrested (Newswatch, 1990: 2-7).

A dispassionate appraisal of the compelling reasons why ECOWAS intervened in the Liberian Civil War call to mind spill-over effects of the crisis to immediate neighbours, the alarming rate of the refugees and the humanitarian concerns.

Patterns of Intervention

Of course, the situation in Liberia continued to deteriorate against the background of intensive fighting between the AFL and the NPFL. The condition even became worse as Charles Taylor's guerrilla warriors were supported by Cote d'Ivoire Burkina Faso, Libya and North Korea.

The Ivorian and Burkinabe support for Taylor demonstrated a penchant for personal interest against national and regional security interest. Daisy Tolbert, wife of the former Liberian leader, William Tolbert, executed by Doe after the coup, enjoyed close family tie with the Burkinabe president and related to the Ivorian leader Houphouet Boigny (Nwoke, 2005:112-113). This lends credence to why Cote d'Ivoire supported the first Thomas Quiwonkpa coup attempt in 1985 and provided a launching base for Taylor in December 1989.

The negative patterns of intervention on the conflict only increased more killings and atrocities prevailing in Liberia. On the other hand, Nigeria Head of State during this period, General Babangida, had a history of personal friendship with Doe. This was show by several visits made to Nigeria by Doe before the war broke out. For example in 1988, Doe established the Babangida Institute of International Relations (BIIRL) in Liberia, which was funded and staffed through the support from Nigeria. And after the 1990 coup attempt in Nigeria, Doe also visited Babangida to show solidarity. Yet, Babangida did not intervene in the crisis until such action was tied with ECOWAS' idea of collective security.

ECOMOG Intervention

Strictly speaking, the Liberia peacekeeping operation was the ECOWAS first organised peacekeeping mission in the sub-region, although member states of the organisation have participated in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations under the auspices of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). Nevertheless, ECOWAS' assertive intervention started on 30th May, 1990, when the Heads of States of the sub-region at their Banjul (Gambia) Summit meeting called on the parties to the conflict to observe an immediate cessation of hostilities, and all forms of atrocities taken place in Liberia, including restoration of peace and security to the country (Akinyeye,2003:245-247).

Subsequently, on the recommendation of Nigeria Head of State at the Banjul Summit, a seven nation's mediation committee was set up. Members of the committee included Nigeria, Togo, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Mali and

Gambia. The committee thereafter held a meeting with the warring factions and other interest groups with a view to end the crisis. Meetings was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone between 5-7 July 1990. But as it turnout, it ended in a deadlock.

One of the reasons was that Taylor and members of the NPFL insisted that Doe must step down as a precondition to end hostilities. A request that was vehemently rejected by Doe. While ECOWAS was still employing diplomacy to try to resolve the crisis, millions were still trapped in the country coupled with Wanton killings. The Head of States of ECOWAS did not relent in their called on the United Nation, especially the Security Council members for humanitarian assistance for refugees and those trapped in Liberia. Since parties to the conflict had refused to embrace peace and considering the danger the sub-region was exposed to, and the alarming dimension the situation in Liberia had reached, ECOWAS Heads of States and government standing mediation committee met in Banjul from the 16th to 17th August, 1990 (Adeleke, 1995: 133).

They decided afterward to assume the responsibility of ensuring peace and security in the sub-region. The final communiqué provided for dispatching a ceasefire-monitoring group to be known as ECOMOG to Liberia with troops contributed by Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The military option became inevitable after the appeal to warring factions to ceasefire was altogether ignored. Of the 6,000 troops contributed to ECOMOG, Nigeria contingent was 3,000, Ghana 2,000, while others provided relatively small contingents (Oni, 2002:59-60) And it was only five countries out of the sixteen member states that contributed. ECOMOG was placed under a Ghanaian commander Lt. General Arnold Quainoo, to be assisted by a Guinea deputy commander. The mandate was to restoring peace, law and order, ensuring a ceasefire and establishing a free zone in Monrovia as well as the evacuation refugees as the short-term objective of ECOMOG. The long-term aim was to install an interim government, paving ways for reconciliation through the convening of a national conference and conducting a peaceful election.

It should however be noted that of all the three major parties involved in the conflict namely, the AFL, NPFL, INPFL, only the NPFL under the leadership of Taylor was opposed to ECOMOG coming to Liberia, and vowed to resist and fight ECOMOG's intervention (Golwa, 2009: 280-283).

The D. Day was on the 24th August, 1990 when ECOMOG landed in Liberia for intervention. Accordingly, upon landing, ECOMOG came under a heavy attack from NPFL guerrilla warriors of Taylor. The troops fought back professionally in an operation called "Operation Liberty" and cleared the city and its environs of the NPFL rebels. The result was that there was an end to the immediate shooting in the state capital Monrovia and its environs, though fighting still continued in the interior. Nonetheless, ECOMOG's initial success made possible the distribution of relief materials and supplies of food and drugs within Monrovia and its environs. ECOMOG success equally made possible the evacuation of those that have been trapped in Liberia and more supplies to different refugee groups. The success of ECOMOG under the command General Quinoo was greeted with euphoria. This was so, especially the result of the operation liberty, ensured that all those trapped in the conflict were freed, while relief materials were made available to most peoples.

However, it was not long before the unexpected happened. On 9th September, 1990, President Doe scheduled a "surprise visit" to ECOMOG Headquarters at the free port of Monrovia. In the course of the trip, he was captured, tortured and killed by Johnson and his INPFL (Best, 2009: 252). The development drew much criticism from within and outside Liberians, as well as seriously questions about the neutrality of ECOMOG were raised. In fact, the ECOMOG mission was accused of complicity in the capture and subsequent killing of Doe.

The capture of Samuel Doe near ECOMOG headquarter and his eventual killing by the Prince Johnson led INPLF on 9th September, 1990, necessitated a change in the command structure of ECOMOG and a further amendment in the peacekeeping operation of the force. Indeed, the peacekeeping mission was changed to peace-enforcement. First, the Ghanaian commander, Lt. General Arnold Quainoo was replaced by Major-General Joshua Dogonyaro of Nigeria (Vogt, 1992: 34-37). Second, ECOMOG peacekeeping mandate was transformed into peace-enforcement as ECOMOG soldiers went on offensive.

The troops began using artillery barrage with 150m shells, backed by bombing raids, using MIG21 and 23 fighters jets and tanks firing missiles. The ECOMOG offensive had huge devastating impact on INPLF of Prince

Johnson and Charles Taylor's NPFL. These rebel groups were neutralized and demoralized. There was a total blockade on their means of arms supplies. They weakened Taylor's forces through their unending onslaughts on his guerrilla warriors thus compelling him to sue for a truce.

Consequently, the Chairman of ECOWAS during this period and Gambian President Sir Sawuda Jawara, presided over this truce at the Banjul Accord of October 23 1990. Taylor was represented by Ernot Eastman and Tow Woewiyu. Brigadier David Nimley led the late Doe's AFL team. While Prince Johnson led the INPFL. It was at this meeting that ECOMOG was directed to ceasefire and all the warring factions were directed to hand over their arms to ECOMOG. Thus, the war ended. Shortly after, arrangement for an interim government was set in motion. Between 27-28, November 1990, an extraordinary meeting of ECOWAS Heads of States was held in Mali, where ECOWAS Heads of States met Charles Taylor for the first time (ECOWAS, 1990: 30). Prince Yommie Johnson still led the INPIL, while General Hezejial Bowen led the AFL.

ECOWAS in anticipation of the Bomako Conference, sworn-in Dr Amos Sawyer as Interim Head of Government of Liberia. The Bomako conference, also decided that all parties to the conflict in Liberia should dialogue among themselves and equally empowered ECOMOG to search and disarm the warring factions, create a free zone for free movement and restrict each faction to its base.

In pursuance of the ECOWAS peacekeeping role in Liberia, the ECOWAS standing mediation committee held its third summit meeting at its headquarters in Togo, from 12 to 13 February 1992 under the Chairmanship of Sir Dawuda Jawara, President of Gambia. Dr. Amos Sawyer represented the Interim Government of Liberia, Hezekial Bowen (AFL), Taylor (NPFL) and Johnson (INPFL) (Awarawo, 2010: 97). These meetings provided opportunities for the parties to the conflict to dialogue amongst themselves and advanced the search for a peaceful and durable settlement of the armed conflict.

Furthermore, there were other emerging warring factions to the Liberian conflict vying for political and military advantages. Some of these groups include the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) and the Liberian Peace Council (LPC). All were given attention in view of finding lasting peace to the situation. And in line with ECOMOG long objective, elections were conducted, which brought Taylor to power as President of Liberia in 1997. It is however clear that ECOWAS ECOMOG achieved some measure of success and facilitated an internationally acclaimed free and fair election in Liberia. Again, before Taylor's first tenure in office could come to an end, conflict had once more erupted in Liberia and became more intensified by February 2003. In fact, the situation degenerated into yet another civil war against the background of what many Liberians perceived as misrule by the Taylor led government.

However, while Charles Taylor's government, the Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy, Movement for democracy in Liberia and ECOWAS were holding talks to resolve the impasse on the 4th of June, 2003, the United Nation backed special court in Sierra Leone made announcement of indictment on Charles Taylor of War crime, which further exacerbated the tension in Liberia (The Guardian, 2003: 1-2) And in view of the worsening situation in Liberia, ECOWAS Heads of States and prominent world leaders began appealing to Taylor to step down and quit Liberia for the purposes of peace even though his tenure was not over as Liberia's elected president. It is against this background that Taylor left Liberia for Nigeria on 11th August, 2003 (Punch, 2003). This development created a space for the implementation of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on the 18th August, 2003.

Taylor's exit also led to the appointment of Mr. Gyude Bryant and Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Chairman and vice chairperson of the all-inclusive Nation transitional government of Liberia. It was this arrangement, coupled with the contributions of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU), ECOWAS and the United Nations that made it possible for Liberia to hold elections in October, 2005, which eventually culminated in the emergence of Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the president of Liberia and the first female president in Africa. At the end of the two terms office of Ellen Johnson, elections were conducted, which brought George Weah to power as the president of Liberia. The peaceful transition and the emergence of Senator George Weah as president signify a new and enduring democratic trajectory in the history of Liberia (Vanguard, 2018).

Kindly include somewhere here, the implications of the civil war/crisis for other Africans in Liberia and Liberians in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

No doubt, Liberia has overcome several challenges since the foundation of the country in second decades of the ninetieth century. The determination by the ruling elites to put the nation on the pathway of stability and development by successive regimes shortly after the end the country's first civil war is evident in the democratic culture, which has endured till date.

In the twelve years, preceding the emergence of President Weah, former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf managed to ensure post-conflict peace and stability in Liberia while raising the profile of her country in the West African sub-region. Under her watch, Liberia's external debt was written off, some war-time infrastructure were repaired and she brought in investors, particularly the Chinese. Liberia also regained her voice within the international community, even if Ellen has been accused of being too pro-American. It is also under her watch that Liberia has recorded the first democratic transition since 1944, and despite the initial hiccup of a run-off (recent Presidential elections in Liberia have ended with a run-off – 2005, 2011 and 2017), the 2017 election still ended peacefully (Kindly provide sources for all these).

George Weah should see the need to build on name legacy, especially in the areas of education, job creation, infrastructure among others. There are high expectations, not just from the young Liberians who voted for him, but also others in the international community. The Liberian economy remains weak, and far removed from its potential given the country's rich resource base; unemployment is double-digit and infrastructure deficit is high. The process of reconstruction initiated under Sirleaf needs to be fast-tracked to provide jobs for the people and to reassure them that their country is truly on the path to restoration and progress.

What does other African countries take home from this survey? Please include.

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